

Blackbeard

(? - 1718)

Mystery shrouds much of Blackbeard's life. No one knows when or where he was born. Most historians believe he was born in Bristol, England, but some believe his birthplace to be in Jamaica and others in the Carolinas.

Blackbeard's real name was Edward Teach. He received his nickname from his long black beard, which he wore braided. He often tied the ends of the braids with ribbons. During battles, he often put lit matches into his beard. He was a giant of a man and was one of the most fierce, ferocious, and bloodthirsty pirates in history. In addition to his cutlass, he often carried six pistols fastened to his belt.

Teach began his sailing career in privateer ships in Jamaica before becoming a pirate in 1716. He soon became known for his courage and boldness in battle. Soon after becoming a pirate, Blackbeard captured a large, forty-gun French Merchant ship. He renamed it *Queen Anne's Revenge*. For several years, it was the most feared ship on the seas.

Blackbeard sailed the Virginia coast in 1717 and 1718 attacking many ships. He would often pretend to surrender to get closer to a ship, and then he would open fire and attack the victim ship.

He later moved his attacks to the South Carolina shore. At one time he attacked so many ships coming out of Charlestown (now Charleston) harbor that the city officials agreed to pay a ransom for the city if Blackbeard would end his attacks. Blackbeard and his men then sailed to North Carolina and continued several raids. They also made several raids in the Caribbean.

Blackbeard eventually became friends with the governor of North Carolina, Charles Eden. Eden was a corrupt official. According to legend, Eden made a deal with Blackbeard. Eden would provide protection to Blackbeard and his crew in exchange for a share of the booty they received as pirates. Blackbeard even built a house across from the governor's home. The governor performed a wedding ceremony between Blackbeard and a young girl. The girl became Blackbeard's fourteenth wife. Soon after the wedding, however, Blackbeard went back to piracy.

The angry citizens of North Carolina finally went to the lieutenant governor of Virginia for help. The Virginia official hired Robert Maynard to hunt down Blackbeard and his men. After fierce hand-to-hand combat, Maynard and his men killed Blackbeard on November 21, 1718. The battle took place near Ocracoke Inlet off the North Carolina coast. Blackbeard and his crew fought ferociously. Maynard shot Blackbeard with a pistol, but the pirate continued to fight. By the time Maynard killed Blackbeard, the pirate's body had received 25 wounds from the battle. His enemies displayed the head on the bow of their ship and then took it back to Virginia and presented it to the governor. The governor then displayed the head on a pole in a public place.

Many legends still exist, saying Blackbeard buried a great treasure somewhere on the Atlantic coast. In 1996 divers located the remains of Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, off the coast of North Carolina.



Name _____ Date _____

Questions for Consideration

1. Where do most historians believe Blackbeard was born?

2. What was Blackbeard's real name?

3. What unusual thing did Blackbeard put into his beard?

4. What, in addition to a cutlass, did Blackbeard often carry fastened to his belt?

5. When did Blackbeard become a pirate?

6. What did Blackbeard rename his captured merchant ship?

7. What did the city officials of Charleston agree to do for Blackbeard?

8. Who was Blackbeard's friend, Charles Eden?

9. How many wives did Blackbeard have?

10. Who was hired to hunt down Blackbeard?

11. When did Blackbeard die?

12. What happened to Blackbeard's head before it was presented to the governor of Virginia?

13. What did the governor do with Blackbeard's head?

Matching

Write an Eyewitness Account

[illegible]

Anne Bonny

(1690? - 1720?)

The two most famous women pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, both sailed on the same ship with Captain "Calico Jack" Rackum. Both women dressed in men's clothing most of their lives. They were both as fierce and courageous as any of the Caribbean pirates.

Anne Bonny was born in Ireland. While still a young girl, she and her parents moved to South Carolina. Her father left the legal profession and became a successful merchant. Soon he bought a large plantation and became one of the wealthiest citizens of Charleston.

Neighbors remembered Bonny for her temper. One story often told is that during her youth, in a fit of temper, she stabbed a servant girl with a table knife.

Bonny's parents raised her to be a proper lady in Charleston society. However, she preferred to be a tomboy. Society offered little opportunity for young women to break away from their traditional roles of the day. She fell in love with a poor ruffian and married against her father's wishes. When her father learned of this, he disinherited her. Soon, Bonny and her husband moved to New Providence in the Bahamas. There she soon met several pirates, including one named "Calico Jack" Rackum.

Rackum persuaded Bonny to leave her husband, join him, and become a pirate. Women were not welcome on pirate ships, however. Many pirates believed that having a woman on their ship would bring them bad luck. Because of this superstition, Bonny dressed in men's clothes before she joined the crew of Rackum's ship. They raided several ships, and Bonny fought as hard as any of the men. Another woman pirate, Mary Read, soon joined Rackum's crew. Often the two women fought side by side.

Officials finally tracked down Rackum and his crew in late October 1720. A British naval vessel attacked Rackum's ship, but during the battle, the pirates became too drunk to fight. Bonny and Read continued to fight until the very end of the battle. Finally the officials defeated the pirates and arrested all of them.

During their trials, the courts found Rackum, Bonny, Read, and the rest of the crew members guilty of piracy and sentenced them to hang. The lack of courage of the male pirates still upset Bonny. On the day of Rackum's execution, Bonny told him that if he had fought like a man, they would not be hanging him like a dog.

Shortly before her scheduled hanging, Bonny received a reprieve. She discovered that she was expecting a child. The law did not allow the killing of an unborn child. Bonny remained in prison for a short time, but was eventually released. Bonny's father may have paid for her release. Many historians believe she returned to Charleston with her father. Others believe that she repented her pirate life and returned to her husband.

After her release, Bonny disappeared from history. No one knows what finally happened to the most celebrated woman pirate in history.



Name _____ Date _____

Questions for Consideration

1. What was Captain Rackum's nickname?

2. Who, other than Anne Bonny, was the woman pirate mentioned in the article?

3. Where was Bonny born?

4. Where did Bonny's family move while she was still a young girl?

5. What were two professions of Bonny's father?

6. What did neighbors remember about Bonny?

7. What did Bonny once do to a servant girl?

8. Why did her father disinherit Anne?

9. Bonny and her husband moved to New Providence. Where is this New Providence located?

10. What happened in October of 1720?

11. What punishment did the courts give to Bonny and the other pirates?

12. What was the last thing Bonny said to Rackum?

13. What finally happened to Bonny?

Captain Kidd

(C. 1645-1701)

William Kidd was a British privateer who later became a pirate. He was born in Greenock, Scotland, about 1645. Captain Kidd is one of the most famous of all pirates. The legend of his vast hidden treasure is also one of the most famous buried treasure stories in history. Robert Louis Stevenson's famous pirate novel, *Treasure Island*, is not a biography of Kidd, but Stevenson patterned his novel after Kidd's life.



We know little about Kidd's early life, but by 1690 he was a ship owner in New York.

He served England's King William III against French privateers in the West Indies. In 1696 sailors recommended Kidd to the Earl of Bellomont to help rid the waters of pirates. Bellomont was the British governor of the territory that is now Massachusetts and New York. Kidd received two royal commissions giving him permission to attack French as well as pirate ships.

Kidd and his men sailed from Plymouth, England, to New York for additional men and supplies. They then sailed to Madagascar and the eastern coast of Africa.

Because they were not successful enough capturing either French or pirate ships, his men threatened to mutiny. Kidd had an argument with a gunner named William Moore. When Moore insisted they become pirates and attack a Dutch ship, Kidd became enraged, called him a dog, and hit Moore over the head with a bucket. Moore died of the injury the next day. The crew continued to threaten to mutiny. Finally, in desperation, Kidd turned to piracy and began attacking ships of any nation.

Their greatest success was capturing a Moorish ship named the *Queda Merchant*. Kidd sold most of its cargo for over 10,000 English pounds. This was a huge fortune in those days.

After this, the East India Company, England's major trading company, insisted on his arrest since his actions hurt their world trade. The English now declared that Kidd was a pirate.

Kidd returned to America in 1698. He then sailed to Boston to proclaim his innocence. Officials tricked Kidd into going ashore to get a pardon, but instead, they arrested him. Kidd assumed Lord Bellomont would help him keep his freedom. Bellomont refused, and officials then shipped Kidd to London.

Authorities imprisoned Kidd for two years in the notorious Newgate prison. Finally, authorities took him to the Old Bailey. The Old Bailey was London's most famous criminal court. There they tried Kidd and found him guilty of piracy and murder. He wrote to the Speaker of England's House of Commons and promised to reveal the whereabouts of his treasure if they would spare his life. The speaker refused to make a deal. Ever since Kidd tried to make this deal, the legend of his vast buried treasure continues.

Officials hanged Kidd on May 23, 1701. They then dipped the body in tar to preserve it. Then they chained the body to the bank of the Thames River. It remained there for several years as a warning to others of the punishment for piracy.

Name _____ Date _____

Questions for Consideration

1. Where was William Kidd born?

2. What is the title of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous novel about pirates?

3. In what city was Kidd a ship owner by 1690?

4. Which English king did Kidd serve against French privateers?

5. Who was the British governor of the territory that is now Massachusetts and New York?

6. What happened to William Moore?

7. What was the *Queda Merchant*?

8. What was the name of England's major trading company?

9. In what U. S. city was Kidd arrested?

10. What famous prison held Kidd for two years?

11. How and when did Kidd die?

12. What happened to Kidd's body after his death? Why was this done?

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary

The following is a list of words used in the story of Captain Kidd. Look each of them up in a dictionary and copy the meaning on this sheet. After the meaning, write a sentence using the word appropriately.

1. commission: _____

2. enraged: _____

3. legend: _____

4. mutiny: _____

5. notorious: _____

6. novel (a type of book): _____

7. pardon: _____

8. pirate: _____

9. privateer: _____

10. proclaim: _____